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ABSTRACT

Bucks County, Pennsylvania intermediate unit (IU) programs for the gifted are discussed in terms of Pennsylvania standards for the gifted, pupil selection methods, and IU services for the gifted and talented. Among topics covered in a section on program standards are guidelines for selecting gifted pupils (from kindergarten through the grades); organizational patterns (such as independent study, tutoring, and small group instruction); special instructional materials; and personnel certification requirements. Briefly explained are methods for pupil selection such as observation of personal qualities, identification of superior readers, and criteria (including social or economic deprivation and learning disabilities) for granting exceptions to the minimum IQ requirement of 130. Descriptions of the IU services provided include seven types of pilot programs in such areas as humanities, special interest enrichment programs, philosophy, and mathematics; art scholarships for talented 10th and 11th grade pupils; and a resource center which houses media and curricular materials as well as a professional library on the gifted and talented. Appended are a worksheet to record multiple data for pupils and sample checklists to screen for giftedness, evaluate personal qualifications, and identify superior reading skills. (SB)

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BUCKS COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT #22

Special Education Division

INTERMEDIATE UNIT PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED

1975 - 1976

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EC080221

Gifted Program
1975-76

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Appendix:

A. Screening for Giftedness

B. Evaluation of Personal Qualities

C. General Reading Skills

D. Data Worksheet

Visitors are welcome in all programs. Please make arrangements by calling or writing:

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I. PENNSYLVANIA STANDARDS FOR THE GIFTED

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established standards for special education programs, in accordance with the will of the legislature. The gifted are included in the list of children for whom such programs are required. Programs for the gifted are established by Intermediate Units and local districts in compliance with section 4-A of the Special Education Standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Several paragraphs from these standards are quoted below:

General Statement

"Mentally gifted children are those children who, in accordance with objective criteria prescribed in guidelines developed by the Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, have outstanding intellectual and/or creative ability, the development of which requires special activities or services not ordinarily provided by local educational agencies."

"Mentally gifted children of elementary and secondary school age who have been identified by multiple criteria, including teacher recommendation, academic achievement, group and individual psychological testing and interest inventories, as ranking among the top three per cent of the nation's school-age population and who will benefit from individualized programs utilizing school professional personnel, professional service personnel, and community personnel to provide and encourage acceleration, enrichment, resource tutoring independent study and leadership skills aimed at developing each child's potential to function as a productive and creative adult, are the individuals eligible for special programs for the gifted."

Pupils

A. Admission

1. "Whether a pupil qualifies for a class for the gifted is determined by such factors as intelligence quotient [130 or better on individual psychological test], achievement, scholastic record, aptitudes and interests and by professional recommendation and counseling interviews as determined by the guidelines issued by the Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education."

2. "Consideration shall be given to exceptions to those children described in (1) above according to recommendations of the psychologist and school professional personnel."

B. Continuance

"Selection of gifted pupils begins at kindergarten and extends through the grades; first, as a part of the overall testing procedure of the school and second, as a refined screening

procedure encompassing individual psychological testing, teacher recommendation and pupil and parent interest."

Organizational Patterns

A. "Special education classes for gifted children shall provide the opportunity for development in relationship to mental ability as outlined in Chapter 8 of State Board Regulations and Guidelines of the Bureau of Special Education."

B. "Special education classes for the gifted may include independent study, tutoring, instruction in small groups, seminars or group counseling sessions, itinerant teacher programs and advanced courses."

C. "Programs, services and provisions for gifted children must be based on pupil population, local interest, leadership and availability of resources and will vary accordingly."

D. "Programs shall be made up of those students of elementary and secondary school age who have been identified as gifted and enrolled according to an approved, filed plan by districts or intermediate units and will have at least 150 minutes of special activity each week during the regular school day."

Instructional Materials, Equipment and Supplies

A. "Instructional materials for classes for the gifted shall be describably different from that which is purchased as part of the basic curriculum."

B. "Instructional materials may include, but not be restricted to supplementary books, pamphlets and periodicals, selected special programs [such as The Great Books Program], sophisticated teaching devices [such as computers, calculators and TV equipment], extraordinary filmstrips, tapes, recording and consumable laboratory equipment beyond normal requirements."

C. "Expenditures for special instructional materials should not exceed 25 per cent of the total gifted budget."

Personnel

"Special teaching staff for the gifted shall be permanently certified in their field of instruction and/or in special education with a master's degree or equivalent, subject to approval of the plan by the Bureau of Special Education."

II. PUPIL SELECTION

(Screening)

In accordance with the following section of the school code, local school districts determine the roster of gifted pupils in their schools:

Section 1371. Definition of Exceptional Children; Reports; Examination.--

(1) "The term "exceptional children" shall mean children of school age who deviate from the average in physical, mental, emotional or social characteristics to such an extent that they require special educational facilities or services."

(2) "It shall be the duty of the secretary of the school board, in every school district of the second, third and fourth class, in accordance with rules of procedure prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to secure information and report to the county board of school directors, on or before the fifteenth day of October of each year, and thereafter as cases arise, every exceptional child within said district. As soon thereafter as possible the child shall be examined by a person certified by the Department of Public Instruction as a public school psychologist, and also by any other expert which the type of handicap and the child's condition may necessitate. A report shall be made to the county board of school directors of all such children examined and of all children residing in the district who are enrolled in special classes."

Decisions as to whom shall be tested are based upon screening procedures which use many criteria and seek the counsel of teachers, guidance personnel, librarians, and parents. Checklists which help to make the screening process more effective include:

1. SCREENING FOR GIFTEDNESS

   Selection of pupils who best qualify on each of twelve criteria
   (See Appendix A)

2. EVALUATION OF PERSONAL QUALITIES

   Observations of an individual pupil
   (See Appendix B)

3. GENERAL READING SKILLS

   Individual rating sheets to identify superior readers
   (See Appendix C)

A worksheet is used to record multiple data for pupils when the school records are canvassed. Since standardized tests vary from district to district, several blank column headings allow for variation.
(See Appendix D)

(Exceptions to Minimum IQ of 130)

In practice, the most common criteria for psychologists to use in granting exceptions to the minimum IQ requirement are:

Social and/or economic deprivation
Language barrier
Learning disability
Emotional problems
Slow maturation

Each of these may have contributed to a poor performance in the testing situation. Experience has yielded enough of these cases which eventually overcome initial handicaps to make it advisable to seek them out.

The psychologist who makes such a recommendation follows through to ensure that the placement has resulted in improvement of the pupil's school experience and not caused further anxieties or learning difficulties. After a reasonable time in the program an individual test is administered.

III. I.U. SERVICES FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

A. Programs for the Academically Gifted

The Special Education Division of I.U. #22 provides seven types of pilot programs for the academically gifted in Bucks County. We have endeavored to offer examples of a variety of possibilities for school districts to study and evaluate when planning local programs.

1. Science Seminars - For high school pupils, utilizing resources not readily available to local districts.

   a. Basic Science Seminar - Enrichment opportunity in a variety of science activities, both applied and research. Seminar meets in industrial and research facilities throughout the county.

   b. Advanced Science Seminar - Independent Study projects, with regular seminar sessions. Available to students who have completed Basic Science Seminar and who design their own research programs. Local research labs, industries and colleges cooperate in this project.

2. Humanities - An interdisciplinary approach that coordinates language arts and social studies programs, with much emphasis on the fine arts.

   a. Humanities Sequence, Grades 5 through 8 - The basic purpose is to seek an understanding of man and his nature through human expression in art, literature, music, drama and recorded history. The pupils follow a four year sequence of man's history from prehistoric times to the present, with attention given to archaeology, economics, government, anthropology and geography. Pupils develop critical approaches to human problems and there is much emphasis on writing - expository, narrative, argumentative and descriptive.

      Community awareness and involvement is important and there are several purposeful trips to museums, theaters, concert halls, art galleries, and historical sites, as well as utilization of community resource people. Pupils enjoy opportunities for creativity in writing, the arts, drama and music. Basic skills are strengthened through regular activities in writing, spelling and reading in the content areas. Grammar study is provided to meet the needs of individual students. Strengthening of study skills is an important activity throughout the program.

b. Senior High Humanities - Pupils in the 9th grade at one school and in the 11th-12th grades at another follow the same basic type of program described above, except for the 4-year sequential history.

3. Special Interest Programs - Augment regular programs and enable pupils to develop individual talents and interests.

a. Elementary S.I.P. - Programs in four school districts provide enrichment activities for pupils in grades one through six. Special Interest teacher meets with pupils in small groups to provide encouragement and guidance in activities which allow individuals to pursue in-depth interests. There is considerable interaction with regular classroom programs, providing opportunities for augumentation of curricular activities. Much emphasis is placed on the nurture and reinforcement of pupil creativity, with classroom activities using a variety of available media and methods. In schools where there are many gifted pupils, the Special Interest teacher functions in a resource room as a full-time teacher. In districts with scattered, small schools, the Special Interest Teacher is an itinerant.

b. Secondary S.I.P. - A program in one small high school provides special interest opportunities for pupils in grades 7, 8 and 9. The teacher guides individual and small group enrichment projects of such varied nature as filmmaking, science experiments, community service, mathematics enrichment activities, etc.

4. Ungraded Elementary - Full-time program for 24 pupils drawn from grades 1 through 5. Instruction in all academic subjects is provided by a team of two teachers. This program offers maximum opportunity for effective individualization and enrichment. Prescriptions are made for all pupils and the intra-class grouping is flexible, providing "grouping for learning" to meet individual needs.

5. Philosophy - High school seniors are given a two-semester course which aims to help each of them:

Become more sensitive to life's major alternative goals and the standard means recommended for attaining them.

Become more responsibly critical and evaluative of discourse with which he is presented in his daily life.

Become more careful of the logical cogency of what he presents to others.

Become more aware of the pitfalls and stumbling blocks in the path of clear, successful problem solving.

Pupils seek insights into politics, aesthetics, and ethics, based on intensive study of the ideas of philosophers from Ancient Greece to our contemporary society.

6. Mathematics - 8th and 12th grade pupils in a small high school are given "Honors Algebra" and Calculus. The courses are intended for those whose ability and interests enable them to benefit from an intensive, in-depth study of mathematics.

7. Open School - Experimental program in a new open school (grades 6-8). Three itinerant I.U. #22 teachers of the gifted are working for part of their total assignment in exploring the possibilities for serving gifted children in an open school setting. Curriculum areas are language arts and science.

B. Provisions for the Talented

I.U. #22 provides scholarships each year to the Governor's School for the Arts. Notices of the competition for these is distributed in January. 1976 will be the 4th summer for this program. Detailed information is found in the announcements sent to all high schools. Only 10th and 11th grade pupils are eligible.

C. Resource Center

I.U. #22 has a collection of media and curriculum materials of interest to teachers and supervisors of programs for the gifted. This is kept in this office of Dr. McWilliams in the Keystone Professional Building, 573 N. Main Street, Doylestown (2nd Floor).

A professional library on the gifted and talented is housed here also. The center serves as a locale for workshops as well as individual and committee study projects. Evaluations of materials in the center are collected from teachers and supervisors, and journal criticisms and articles are available. Considerable interest has been evinced in materials and information on the discovery and encouragement of creativity.

Appendix A

BUCKS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Education Department

SCREENING FOR GIFTEDNESS

Please write the name of the student who best meets each of the following criteria:

Best student. _____

Child with the biggest vocabulary. _____

Most creative and original. _____

Child with the most leadership. _____

Most scientifically oriented child. _____

Child who does the best critical thinking. _____

Able child who is the biggest nuisance. _____

Best motivated child. _____

Child the other children like best. _____

Child who is most ahead on grade placement. _____

Brightest minority group child in the class in case there are more than five, and one has not been named heretofore. _____

Child whose parents are most concerned about increasing the enrichment of his educational progress. _____

_____
Teacher

_____
School

_____
Date

Appendix B

BUCKS COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Special Pupil Services

EVALUATION OF PERSONAL QUALITIES

_____ _____

NAME SCHOOL

_____ _____

BIRTHDATE

Which of these characteristics have you observed in this pupil?

_____ Uses vocabulary beyond age level
_____ Learns processes rapidly
_____ Memorizes quickly
_____ Perceives abstract ideas readily
_____ Sees elements of a problem clearly
_____ Can generalize from given facts
_____ Has great curiosity about nature of man and universe
_____ Follows complex directions easily
_____ Shows resourcefulness in use of materials
_____ Has high degree of self-criticism
_____ Possesses unusual imagination
_____ Reacts quickly in most situations
_____ Has greater than average concentration and attention span
_____ Demonstrates initiative in planning with a group
_____ Organizes personal tasks effectively
_____ Is a rapid reader
_____ Spends considerable time reading
_____ Reading covers a wide range of subjects
_____ Retains easily what he has read
_____ Makes frequent and effective use of the library
_____ Sets up personal reading programs
_____ Shows deep interest in science
_____ Likes to write creatively
_____ Talks easily before a group
_____ Possesses manual dexterity
_____ Demonstrates good taste in matters of art
_____ Has several hobbies
_____ Pursues hobbies with keen interest

_____ _____

Date Signature

Appendix C

Bucks County Public Schools
(Primary)

GENERAL READING SKILLS

(Check list for identification of superior readers)

Name_____ H.R._____

Grade_____

_____Has mastered a wide sight vocabulary

_____Has gained proficiency in the use of word recognition techniques: picture, context, and phonetic clues

_____Has acquired a broad meaning vocabulary

_____Has acquired the ability to grasp main ideas and to read for detail satisfactorily

_____Has acquired good silent reading habits

_____ Has acquired good oral reading habits

_____Has acquired the ability to apply reading skills to workbook activities successfully

_____Shows interest in and ability to read extensively in a variety of areas

Standardized Test Scores: (Percentile or Grade Level)

Date:_____

_____

_____

App.D

No.	Name	Gp. I.Q.	Rdg.	Math	Marks	

	Gp. I.Q.	Rdg.	Math	Marks				